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ABSTRACT

The first section of this study traces the history of the story of "Little Red Riding Hood," from its possible primitive origins, through its first publication in 1697, up to its current status. The second section analyzes the language of an interesting 1856 version of the tale and compares it with more modern versions. Table I indicates levels of reading difficulty for editions of the story according to Fry's readability technique. Table II presents a linguistic analysis of 16 of the 27 versions of the folktale. This analysis reveals that, from 1697 to 1974, sentences have become shorter, the use of complex and complex-compound sentences has decreased, and simple sentences have become more usual. Moreover, it suggests that the level of literary sophistication--evidenced by use of subplots, interior monologue, multiple morals, and imagery--has declined since the 1856 version. It further suggests that children be exposed to more and different kinds of literature during their formative years. (LL)

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# WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD?

## A Study of a Nursery Tale and Its Language

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Abstract:

This is a two-part study of the tale "Little Red Riding Hood." The first section traces the history of the story, from its possible primitive origins, through its first publication in 1697, to its continuing popularity today. The second section analyzes the language of an interesting 1856 version of the tale and compares it with more modern versions. By looking at the kinds of words used, the length of sentences and words, the kinds and complexity of sentences, and literary sophistication, the study shows how a decline has taken place in the use of the English language and offers ideas on a possible remedy.

CS 203 096

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD?

A Study of a Nursery Tale and Its Language

The accompanying version of "Little Red Riding Hood" was published by McLoughlin Brothers in New York City in 1856 as part of "Aunt Mary's Series."** At that time the cost of the McLoughlin Brothers' various editions of this famous old nursery tale ranged from 6 cents plain to 12 cents colored. This particular edition is interesting for two reasons: First, because of its story and, second, because of its language. The purpose of this article is to investigate these two aspects of the 1856 "Red Riding Hood" in order to shed light on elements both past and present in children's literature.

Part I: The Folk Tale

Charles Perrault. The story of Little Red Riding Hood was first published in Paris in 1697 by Charles Perrault in his Histoires ou Contes du temps passé; avec Moralités. However, within the last twenty five years an original manuscript containing five of Perrault's tales (including "Red Riding Hood") has come to light dated 1695.[1] This was a deluxe dedication copy intended for Mademoiselle Elizabeth Charlotte d'Orléans, niece of Louis XIV, and is now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City. Before the end of 1697 Perrault's now-famous tales--"Red Riding Hood," "Sleeping Beauty," "Blue Beard," "Puss in Boots," and "Cinderella," among others--had been reprinted in Holland and France.

Pre-Seventeenth Century. The existence of the story before Perrault is unclear. Some scholars have attempted to find its origin in primitive mythology as early man's attempt to explain natural phenomena. Thus Red Riding Hood becomes dawn swallowed by and delivered from night (or sometimes the sun), represented

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**This copy is owned by Mr. Joseph R. Burton of Geneva, Illinois. It was given as a gift to his mother when she was a child. The authors wish to thank him for publication permission.

by the wolf, or she is described as Spring, crowned with flowers, who cannot remain in the belly of the wolf or winter.[2] Furthermore, the story is linked to the ancient "swallow" legends like Cronus disgorging his swallowed children in Greek mythology, or Jonah being swallowed by the whale in the Old Testament.[3]

Other scholars have attempted to find evidence of the folk origin of the story in Perrault's language. The word "chaperon," for instance, in the French title "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge" is defined in seventeenth century dictionaries as a very old type of hat worn in the Middle Ages.[4] Also, the name "Mother Goose" has been connected with early folklore or even history. This familiar term was made famous by Perrault in his 1697 edition, the frontispiece of which showed three children and an old woman in front of the fire with a plaque on the wall reading "Contes de ma mère l'Oye." It has been suggested that in French medieval villages an old woman kept track of the geese and, as a stock teller of tales, could be called "ma mère l'Oye."[5] The name Mother Goose in French has also been traced back to the mother of Charlemagne, Bertha, "Queen Goosefoot,"[6] or to Bertha, wife of Robert II, king of France in the 11th century, called Bertha Goosefoot.[7] Finally, comparative folklorists, by matching Perrault's version with folk versions dating after him, can find elements which he removed as being "in bad taste, puerile, or too primitive":[8] for instance, the girl being invited to eat her grandmother's flesh or her question about the hairy body of the wolf.

Seventeenth Century. All such theories, however, have by no means been proven. In fact, it is clear that the story of Little Red Riding Hood has never circulated widely where folktales are learned orally; practically all versions are based upon Perrault or the brothers Grimm.[9] Indeed, there are scholars who go so far as to believe that Perrault invented this tale.[10]

It is also clear that fairy tales were fashionable in the court of Louis XIV twenty years before Perrault's publication: a letter by Madame de Sévigné to

her daughter, written in 1676, mentions fairy tales "that they amuse the ladies with at Versailles."[11] This was the Age of Reason, the Neo-Classical Age, when bucolics and eclogues, on classical models, and thus stories of peasants were in fashion.[12] There would then be two levels of the tale: the literal one for children and the symbolic for adults, wherein the wolf in bed seduces the girl. At least Perrault has a "moralité" at the end of his story warning young ladies about gentle wolves, a rational effort by Perrault, it has been suggested, to excuse adult enjoyment of puerile matter.[13]

After Perrault. Since Perrault's publication of his folk tales, they have been translated into English, German, Russian, Swedish, Chinese, and Japanese[14] and become thoroughly familiar to children everywhere. The first translation of Perrault into English was made by Robert Samber in 1729 and appeared in London; before the end of the eighteenth century this translation had been reprinted many times in England.[15] The first American edition, Samber's translation, was issued by Peter Edes in Haverhill, Massachusetts, in 1794[16], or by J. Rivington in New York in 1795.[17]

The Brothers Grimm. The brothers Grimm collected a peasant version of Red Riding Hood, having some German traditions but based on Perrault's printed tale, and printed it as "Rothäppchen" in their collection of 1812.[18] Their ending, which presumably came from German folklore, is different from Perrault: either Red Riding Hood alone or with her grandmother is rescued, either before or after being swallowed by the wolf.[19]

Nineteenth Century. During the nineteenth century, separate tales of Perrault, and sometimes of Grimm, were produced as chapbooks, or "cheap books," costing only a penny (in England) or a few cents (in America); it was through these editions that the stories became so popular.[20] Our 1856 version of "Little Red Riding Hood," costing only a few cents, would obviously fit in at this point, a period of rapid growth in the children's book trade in both England and America:

the first Hans Christian Andersen tales in English and the first book of Lear nonsense appeared in the 1840's, "Red Riding Hood" was published in the Home Treasury Series in 1843, and the Peter Parley books were very popular.[21]

By this time there were many variances in the tale. For instance, Red Riding Hood may carry in her basket custard, butter, cakes, eggs, dainties, bread, cookies, meat, wine, or any combination of these.[22] And the endings are many: the wolf drowns in hot sausage water; or he is slit open and filled with stones; or he is burned in the throat by Red Riding Hood's cap; or he tears the entrails and brains out of the girl and her grandmother; or after the wolf is killed, Red Riding Hood, her mother, grandmother, and wood nymphs all join in singing the Marseillaise.[23]

The 1856 Version. Our 1856 version has some unusual variances: while the wolf is devouring grandmother, Red Riding Hood has some adventures herself. She meets a wasp, a little tom-tit, and "an aged crone gathering watercresses." At the end, after having relayed a secret message to the green huntsman from the old woman, the girl is saved by this huntsman who has been warned by the wasp and tom-tit. Also, by this time the "old crone" has turned into a beautiful young fairy who will always protect Little Red Riding Hood because she has been so kind to the wasp, tom-tit, and watercress lady. The only indication of the origin of this version has been found in one book,[24] wherein the wasp, a little bird, and an old dame looking for cresses appear in a version included in the section "France." The fairy element and moral are not in this version, however. It may be of additional interest to note that both the wasp[25] and watercress[26] are conception symbols--that is, in some folk literature they cause conception if eaten.

Twentieth Century. In more recent times, the wide influence of Little Red Riding Hood can be seen in a variety of ways. A Freudian interpretation of the tale sees the girl's adventures as the Oedipal stage in the development of the

child, the huntsman being the strong father figure.[27] The psychoanalyst Erich Fromm goes even further: "the wolf is really displaying pregnancy-envy when he fills his belly (womb) with the girl and her grandmother, and is punished when Little Red Riding Hood stows stones, the symbol of sterility, in his insides. This is presented as a tale of women who hate men and sex."[28] On a less exalted plane, a modern version of the tale is entitled "Little Black Riding Hood" and her basket contains soul food; she wears a red pants suit, and at the end everyone is saved, including the wolf, who is taken to the city zoo where he's assured of three meals a day.[29] Indeed, this charming folktale has had a long and hardy life!

## Part II: The Language

Kinds of Words. Another interesting feature of this 1856 version of "Little Red Riding Hood" is the high level of its language. Of course it exhibits "old-fashioned" terms no longer in use: "prithee," "quoth," "grandam," "posy," "bethought," "Goody," and "espied." But it also uses words which are still accepted in standard English at a rather sophisticated level: "infantine," "voraciously," "eloquent," "demurely," "knoll," "stagnant," "trudged," "nostril," "decrepit," "fervently," and "mortal." Such words would never be found on any kind of a list of common words, such as the Dale-Chall list of 3000 "familiar" words known by at least 80% of fourth-grade students.[30]

Length of Sentences and Words. The language of our version exhibits sophistication and depth on several other levels as well. One measure of such depth is the length of sentences and words, as indicated by a readability technique. Fry's procedure and graph provide a grade level for reading material based on sentence and word length.[31] Table I gives grade levels according to Fry's graph for twenty seven editions of "Little Red Riding Hood" pulled at random from library shelves in order to obtain a chronological sampling. In each case three samples of approximately one hundred words each were averaged in order to obtain one score. From 1901 on all versions produced a score of

TABLE I: Levels of Reading Difficulty for Editions of "Little Red Riding Hood" According to Fry's Readability Technique

| Date of Publication | Grade Level | Date of Publication | Grade Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1697 (Perrault) | 7th | no date (estimated early 20th century) | 7th |
| 1729 (Samber) | 7th | 1913 | 4th |
| 1820 | 10th** | 1925 | 7th |
| 1854 | 8th | 1928 | 7th |
| 1866 | 7th | 1932 | 5th |
| 187- | 9th** | 1936 | 4th |
| 1875 | 7th | 1944 | 6th |
| 1890 | 7th | 1957 | 6th |
| 1895 | 6th | 1962 | 6th |
| 1895 | 7th | 1967 | 6th |
| 1901 | 9th** | 1967 | 7th |
| 1907 | 6th | 1968 | 5th |
| 1907 | 6th | 1974 | 4th |

1856: 9th

**These scores must be considered approximate since the average number of sentences per 100 words is so low that the point falls off the graph.

between 4th and 7th grades, with a mean score of 5.7. The only scores higher than 7th grade were in versions before 1902, and our 1856 story stands at the top at 9th grade. The mean score before 1907 is 7.6.

Kinds and Complexity of Sentences. Although sentence length correlates highly with sentence complexity,[32] a long sentence is not necessarily complex in thought. A string of short kernal sentences--a long compound sentence--will consist of structures available to immature language users. But mature speakers and writers will use subordinate clauses, noun modifiers, verbals, and more complicated complex sentences.[33] Table II presents a linguistic

TABLE II: Sentence Complexity

| Date | No. of words sampled | No. of sentences | Average sentence length in words | Percentages of total number of sentences | | | | | No. of adjectives | No. of verbals | No. of sub. clauses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Complex | Compound-complex | Complex & compound-complex | Compound | Simple | | | |
| 1697 | 517 | 31 | 16.7 | 36% | 19% | 55% | 10% | 36% | 58 | 14 | 21 |
| 1729 | 524 | 20 | 26.2 | 45% | 35% | 80% | 10% | 10% | 58 | 18 | 36 |
| 1820 | 506 | 18 | 28.1 | 50% | 33% | 83% | 11% | 6% | 77 | 23 | 27 |
| 187- | 544 | 14 | 38.9 | 29% | 36% | 65% | 21% | 14% | 68 | 10 | 18 |
| 1875 | 501 | 26 | 19.3 | 46% | 19% | 65% | 4% | 31% | 65 | 19 | 21 |
| 1890 | 517 | 31 | 16.7 | 32% | 23% | 55% | 3% | 42% | 45 | 9 | 23 |
| 1895 | 507 | 22 | 23.1 | 50% | 23% | 73% | 9% | 18% | 51 | 14 | 26 |
| 1913 | 504 | 33 | 15.3 | 15% | 27% | 42% | 3% | 55% | 44 | 8 | 19 |
| 1928 | 504 | 36 | 14.0 | 58% | 8% | 66% | 3% | 31% | 82 | 18 | 33 |
| 1932 | 515 | 29 | 17.8 | 38% | 21% | 59% | 14% | 28% | 62 | 9 | 21 |
| 1936 | 501 | 32 | 15.7 | 50% | 9% | 59% | 13% | 28% | 59 | 8 | 23 |
| 1957 | 526 | 34 | 15.5 | 41% | 9% | 50% | 6% | 44% | 63 | 15 | 20 |
| 1967 | 529 | 35 | 15.1 | 37% | 6% | 43% | 9% | 49% | 58 | 14 | 20 |
| 1968 | 515 | 44 | 11.7 | 41% | 7% | 48% | 2% | 50% | 49 | 9 | 25 |
| 1974 | 518 | 43 | 12.0 | 26% | 7% | 33% | 9% | 58% | 60 | 8 | 20 |
| 1856 | 507 | 19 | 26.7 | 90% | 5% | 95% | 5% | 0 | 64 | 9 | 33 |

analysis of sixteen of the twenty seven versions of our folktale. These sixteen versions were selected at random, again to provide a chronological sampling. In all cases the first approximately five hundred words were used, variations depending on where a sentence stopped. Besides average sentence length, qualities measured were kinds of sentence (complex, compound-complex, a combination of these two kinds, compound, and simple), number of adjectives, number

of verbals (participles, gerunds, infinitives) and number of subordinate clauses.

Some clear patterns emerge: from 1697 to 1974 sentences have become shorter, the use of complex and complex-compound sentences has lessened, and simple sentences have become more usual. There also seems to be a trend toward fewer verbals and fewer subordinate clauses. Our particular 1856 version stands out emphatically in complex or compound-complex sentences (95%), in average sentence length (26.7 words), in number of subordinate clauses and adjectives used, and in the complete lack of simple sentences. Consider, for instance, the degree of language sophistication needed to understand a sentence like this one at the climax of our story:

> "The better to eat you up," exclaimed the wolf, who was just about to make a spring at the poor little girl, when a wasp, who had followed her into the cottage, stung the wolf in his nostril, and made him sneeze aloud, which gave the signal to a tom-tit perched on a branch near the open casement, who called out "Tweat--tweat," which warned the green huntsman, who accordingly let fly his arrow, that struck the wolf right through the ear and killed him on the spot.

Not only is this a very long sentence--eighty-eight words--but it is a sentence wherein idea is piled upon idea. Within the eight subordinate clauses are at least eleven chronological events: the wasp flies into the cottage, the tom-tit perches on a branch, the wolf cries out, the wolf is about to spring on the girl, the wasp stings the wolf, the wolf sneezes, the sneeze signals the tom-tit, the tom-tit calls out, the huntsman shoots an arrow, the arrow hits the wolf, the wolf dies.

Literary Sophistication. In addition to quality of words, length of sentences and of words, and complexity of sentences and thus of thought, a broader dimension enters into language sophistication: the way the whole is put together. In this case our 1856 version exhibits a literary sophistication which consists of the usage of subplots, interior monologue, multiple morals, and imagery.[34] While the wolf is at grandmother's, Red Riding Hood meets the

wasp, the tom-tit, and the watercress lady, who eventually turns out to be a fairy complete with riddle and magic. It would seem to require a higher level of thought to follow several plots instead of just one. Also, in our version the readers are presented with the inner workings of both the wolf and the girl as they ponder the events. Therefore the reader (or listener) must cope with shifts from external to interior action.[35] Likewise, we are exposed here to several morals, not just the usual one of being careful of strangers: first, the difference in industriousness between a wasp and a bee; second, an exhortation to say one's prayers and pay attention to God; and, third, the major point of having "goodness of heart." And, finally, there are several kinds of images used here, ranging from the specific colors of the flowers to the simile of Red Riding Hood darting into the forest "like a frightened hare."

## Conclusion

There is today a general concern in our country about a decline in the use of the English language. This decline is evidenced in lower verbal scores on the national Scholastic Aptitude Tests, in increased numbers of college remedial English courses, in the years of euphemisms and double-talk and lies during Viet Nam and Watergate, and in the examples of "verbal atrocities" catalogued in popular books such as Edwin Newman's Strictly Speaking.[36] Since language is thinking and thus even civilization, such concern would seem warranted.

Our analysis of this 1856 version of "Little Red Riding Hood" may give clues to one reason why such a decline has taken place: the English language to which children have been exposed has experienced a continual decrease in sophistication and depth--in quality and thus exactness of words used, in length of sentences and words, in complexity of sentences and thus of thought, and in the complexity and artistry with which the whole is put together. Although Ernest Hemingway won the Nobel Prize in literature for the profound effect of his simple and direct style, and although the world wisely admires Henry David Thoreau's call to "Simplify, simplify," this decline from simplicity to simple-

mindedness had best be stopped. Children from the earliest ages should be exposed to all kinds of oral language (including perhaps our 1856 nursery tale), and, whenever they start to learn to read, they "should be given systematic training through the reading program so they may develop more facility at an earlier age in understanding increasingly complex communications from the printed page."[37] This burden of building up language, and thus exercising the thinking process, instead of watering down and decimating language, and thus weakening the ability to think, must be placed upon teachers, school officials, authors, publishers, librarians, parents--in short upon us all. Otherwise, man might not even be able to "endure," much less "prevail," as William Faulkner so lucidly spelled out the human task in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

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## Text of 1856 "Little Red Riding Hood"

TITLE PAGE (and front cover): AUNT MARY'S SERIES
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Published by McLoughlin Brothers, 24 Beckman Street, New York
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by McLoughlin Bros., in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the U.S., for the Southern District of N.Y.

In a retired and pleasant village there once lived a little girl, who was one of the prettiest children ever seen. Her mother loved her to excess, and as to her grandmother, she was doatingly fond of her, and looked upon her as the delight of her eyes, and the comfort of her declining years. The good old dame had a little hood of scarlet velvet made for her darling, which became her so daintily, that for miles round she had been nicknamed Little Red Riding Hood.

One day, when her mother had baked a batch of cakes she said to Little Red Riding Hood: "I hear your poor grandam has been ailing, so, prithee, go and see if she be any better, and take her this cake and a little pot of butter." Little Red Riding Hood, who was a willing child, and always ready to be useful, put the things into a basket, and immediately set off for the village where her grandmother lived, which lay on the other side of a thick wood. As she reached the outskirts of the forest, she met a wolf, who would have liked vastly to have devoured her at once, had there not been some wood-cutters near at hand, whom he feared might kill him in turn. So he sidled up to the little girl, and said, in as winning a tone as he could assume, "Good morning, Little Red Riding Hood." "Good morning, Master Wolf," answered she, who had no idea of being afraid of so civil spoken an animal. "And pray where may you be going so early?" quoth the wolf. "I am going to my grandmother's," replied Little Red Riding Hood, who thought there could be no harm in telling him. "And what are you carrying in your basket, my pretty little maid?" continued the wolf, sniffing its contents. "Why, a cake and a pot of butter," answered simple Little Red Riding Hood, "because grandmother has been ill." "And where does poor grandmamma live?" inquired the wolf, in a tone of great interest. "Down beyond the mill, on the other side of the wood," said she. "Well," cried the wolf, "I don't mind if I go and see her too. So I'll take this road, and do you go through the wood, and we'll see which of us shall be there first."

Now, the wily wolf knew well enough that he would be the winner in such a race. For, letting alone his four feet against poor Little Red Riding Hood's two, he could dash through the underwood, and swim across a pond, that would bring him by a very short cut to the old grandam's cottage, while he shrewdly guessed that the little girl would stop to gather strawberries, or to make up a posy, as she loitered along the pleasanter but more round-about path through the wood. And sure enough the wolf, who cared neither for strawberries nor for flowers, made such good speed that he had presently reached the grandmother's cottage. Thump, thump, went the wolf against the door. "Who's there?" cried the grandam from within. "Only your grandchild, Little Red Riding Hood," cried the wolf, imitating the little girl's shrill infantine

voice as best he might. "I have come to bring you a cake and a pot of butter that mother sends you." "Lift the latch, and the bolt will fall." The wolf did so, and in he went, and, without saying a word more, he fell upon the poor old creature, and ate her up in no time, for he had not tasted food for the last three days. He next shut the door, and putting on the grandam's nightcap and nightgown, he got into the bed, drew the curtain, and buried his head in the pillow, and kept laughing in his sleeve at the trick he meant to put upon poor Little Red Riding Hood, and wondering how long it would be before she came.

Meanwhile Little Red Riding Hood rambled through the wood with child-like glee, stopping every now and then to listen to the birds that were singing so sweetly on the green boughs, and picking strawberries, which she knew her grandam loved to eat with cream, till she had nearly filled her basket; nor had she neglected to gather all the pretty flowers, red, blue, white, or yellow, that hid their sweet little heads amidst the moss; and of these her apron was at last so full, that she sat down under a tree to sort them and wind them into a sweath.

While she was thus occupied, a wasp came buzzing along and delighted at finding so many flowers without the trouble of searching for them, he began to drink up their honey very voraciously. Little Red Riding Hood knew well the difference of a wasp and bee--how lazy the one, and how industrious the other, yet, as they are all God's creatures, she wouldn't kill it, and only said: "Take as much honey as you like, poor wasp, only do not sting me." The wasp buzzed louder, as if to thank her for her kindness, and, when he had sipped his fill, flew away. Presently, a little tom-tit, who had been hopping about on a bough opposite, darted down on the basket, and pecked at one of the strawberries. "Eat as much as you like, pretty tom-tit," said Little Red Riding Hood: "there will be still plenty left for grandam and for me." The tom-tit replied, "Tweat--tweat--," in his own eloquent language; and, after gobbling up at least three strawberries, flew away, and was soon out of sight. Little Red Riding Hood now bethought her it was time to go on; so putting her wreath into her basket, she tripped along demurely enough, till she came to a brook, where she saw an aged crone, almost bent double, seeking for something along the bank. "What are you looking for Goody?" said the little girl. "For water-cresses, my pretty maid," mumbled the poor old woman; "and a sorry trade it is, that does not earn me half bread enough to eat." Little Red Riding Hood thought it very hard the poor old creature should work and be hungry too, so she drew from her pocket a large piece of bread, which her mother had given her to eat by the way, and said, "Sit down, Goody, and eat this, and I will gather your water-cresses for you." The old woman willingly accepted the offer, and sat down on a knoll, while Little Red Riding Hood set to work in good earnest, and had presently filled her basket with water-cresses. When her task was finished, the old crone rose up briskly, and patting the little maid's head, said, in quite a different voice: "Thank you, my pretty Little Red Riding Hood, and now, if you happen to meet the green huntsman as you go along, pray give him my respects, and tell him there is game in the wind." Little Red Riding Hood promised to do so, and walked on, but presently she looked back to see how the old woman was getting along, but, look as sharp as she might, she could see no trace of her, nor of her water-cresses. She seemed to have vanished clean out of sight. "It is very odd," thought Little Red Riding Hood, to herself, "for surely I can walk faster than she." Then she kept looking about her, and prying into all the bushes, to see for the green huntsman, whom she had never heard of before, and wondered why the old woman had given her such a message. At last, just as she was passing by a pool of stagnant water, so green that you would have taken it for grass, and have walked into it, as Little Red Riding Hood, who had never seen it before, though she had gone that same way often enough, had nearly done, she perceived a huntsman clad in green from top to toe, standing on the bank, apparently watching the flight of some birds that were wheeling above his head. "Good morning, Master Huntsman," said Little Red Riding Hood; "the old water-cress woman sends her service to you, and says there is game in the wind." The huntsman nodded assent, and bent his ear to the ground to listen, and then drew out an arrow tipped with a green feather, and strung

his bow, without taking any further notice of Little Red Riding Hood, who trudged onwards, wondering what it all meant.

Presently the little girl reached her grandmother's well-known cottage, and knocked at the door. "Who is there?" cried the wolf, forgetting to disguise his voice. Little Red Riding Hood was somewhat startled at first; then thinking her grandam had a bad cold that made her very hoarse, she answered: "It is your grandchild, Little Red Riding Hood, who has brought you a cake, and a little pot of butter, which mother sends you." The wolf then softened his voice a little, as he replied: "Lift the latch, and the bolt will fall." Little Red Riding Hood did as she was told, and entered the cottage. The wolf then hid his head under the bed-clothes, and said: "Put the cake and the pot of butter on the shelf, my dear, and come and help me to rise." Little Red Riding Hood set down her basket, and then went and drew back the curtain, when she was much surprised to see how oddly her grandmother looked in her night-clothes.

"Dear me! grandmamma," said the little girl, "what long arms you have got!" "The better to hug you my child," answered the wolf.

"But, grandmamma, what long ears you have got!" persisted Little Red Riding Hood. "The better to listen to you, my child," replied the wolf.

"But, grandmamma, what large eyes you have got!" continued the little girl. "The better to see you, my child," said the wolf.

"But, grandmamma, what terrible large teeth you have got!" cried Little Red Riding Hood, who now began to be frightened.

"The better to eat you up," exclaimed the wolf, who was just about to make a spring at the poor little girl, when a wasp, who had followed her into the cottage, stung the wolf in his nostril, and made him sneeze aloud, which gave the signal to a tom-tit perched on a branch near the open casement, who called out "Tweat--tweat," which warned the green huntsman, who accordingly let fly his arrow, that struck the wolf right through the ear and killed him on the spot.

Little Red Riding Hood was so frightened, even after the wolf had fallen back dead, that she bounced out of the cottage, and, shutting the door, darted into the forest like a frightened hare, and ran till she was out of breath, when she dropped down quite exhausted under a tree.

Here she discovered that she had mistaken the road, when, to her great relief, she espied her old friend the water-cress woman, at some distance; and, feeling sure she could soon overtake the aged dame, she again set off, calling out to her every now and then, to stop. The old crone, however, seemed too deaf to hear; and it was not till they had reached the skirts of the forest that she turned round, when to Little Red Riding Hood's surprise, she perceived a young and beautiful being in place of the decrepit creature she thought she was following.

"Little Red Riding Hood," said the fairy, for such she was, "your goodness of heart has saved you from a great danger. Had you not helped the poor old water-cress woman, she would not have sent word to the green huntsman, who is generally invisible to mortal eyes, to save you. Had you killed the wasp, or driven away the tom-tit, the former could not have stung the wolf's nostril, and made him sneeze, nor the latter have given the huntsman the signal to let fly his shaft. In future, no wild beast shall ever harm you, and the fairy folks will always be your friends."

So saying, the fairy vanished, and Little Red Riding Hood hastened home to tell her mother all that had befallen her; nor did she forget that night to thank Heaven, fervently, for having delivered her from the jaws of the wolf.